

Ticket to Work/Work Incentives Improvement Act
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant
Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes
June 19, 2003

The Ticket to Work/Work Incentives Improvement Act Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Advisory Group Meeting was called to order by Cochair William Heavilin, at 10:40 a.m., on Thursday, June 19, 2003, by teleconference at the Division of Health Care Financing & Policy, 1100 East William Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Carson City, Nevada and the Grant Sawyer Office Building, 555 E. Washington Avenue, Room 4412, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Members in Attendance:

Lisa Erquiaga, Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living/Fallon Office
Robert "Red" Foster, General Public
Paul Gowins, Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living
Terry Hardy, General Public
William Heavilin, Nevada Disability Advocacy & Law Center
Robin Renshaw, Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents
Alyce Thomas, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services

Members Not in Attendance:

Robert Simola, Ormsby ARC
Nina Davenport, National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Tracy DuPree, Nevada State Welfare Division
Kimberli Varé, The Skill Builders of Nevada

Staff:

Charles Duarte, Administrator, Division of Health Care Financing and Policy
Connie Anderson, Chief, Medicaid Services and Nevada Checkup
Jean Laird, Contract Program Manager, Ticket to Work/Work Incentives Improvement Act
Priscilla Hartsfield, Contract Admin. Asst. Ticket to Work/Work Incentives Improvement Act

Others Present:

Bonnie Dixon, Nevada Disability Advocacy & Law Center
Kitti Barth, Administrator, Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
Karen Jurkevicius, Personal Care Attendant

I. Roll Call

Priscilla Hartsfield called the meeting roll. A quorum was not present. However, it was decided to continue with the meeting and defer any actions items.

Additional members later arrived and the roll was called again. It was determined that a quorum was present.

II. May Meeting Minutes Approval

The May meeting minutes were reviewed and no additions or corrections were noted. Alyce Thomas made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Robert "Red" Foster seconded the motion. The minutes as written for the May 2003 meeting were approved.

Jean Laird, Contract Program Manager, talked about recruitment regarding the program manager. Jean Laird and Bob Simola have completed those interviews and there were some excellent candidates. Background checks are in progress on the top two candidates. Connie Anderson, Chief of Medicaid Services will do a second interview of those two top candidates and make the final decision.

The division has three vacant administration assistant positions, so Jean Laird and another program manager interviewed together for all three vacancies. Three qualified candidates were identified and it looks like we are going to get the number one candidate.

For the Program Specialists, the division has not made a decision whether to fill the positions. Since these positions will expire December 2004, the division is considering contracting for those services, which may result in higher quality candidates.

III. Legislative Update on HIWA (Health Insurance for Work Advancement)

Chuck Duarte, Administrator, Division of Health Care Finance and Policy, informed the members that Mel Watson is the information technology (IT) project manager assigned to develop the premium collection system for HIWA. Rita Mackay has been asked to set up a meeting with the key players involved in the development of the system. This system will be critical in ensuring that individuals have made their payments and are eligible to have their information entered into the Medicaid system.

Mr. Duarte talked about the Republican caucus and their position on several issues in the budget. One of them involves the Welfare Division and its staffing and caseload estimates. Changes in the welfare caseloads could mean a reopening of the budgets, although the Governor is opposed to that. Mr. Duarte expressed some anxiety that the Medicaid budgets could be reopened and the Legislature may take another look at any new programs. Although HIWA has strong support, he said we have to be diligent and keep an eye on the HIWA Program in the next legislative session.

From the standpoint of Medicaid, Mr. Duarte said we are going to continue operations. Since there is an approved budget right now, we would operate similarly to how the federal government operates when they don't have a revenue plan approved. They operate under what is called a continuing resolution. Operations will continue with the revenue authority we have until we run out of money. That probably would be sometime in the state fiscal year 2005. Presumably, the tax issue will be resolved by then. He said he might get a request to defer new program development until the tax package is approved. But right now he has not gotten any direction like that to slow things down. Mr. Duarte reported that he is moving ahead right now with recruitment as well as the system development efforts for HIWA.

Chuck Duarte said the plan is to get the premium payment system built and to start processing applications, determining eligibility three months prior to the start date. With a start date of July 2004 there is a tight time frame for system development efforts and getting materials developed. He said we are still on track and pushing ahead. He indicated it would be helpful if the group talked to their legislators about support of the Medicaid budget. Mr. Duarte said John Sasser reported to him that e-mails to legislators are running 150 to one against new taxes and for reopening of the Medicaid and Welfare budgets.

Paul Gowin said we probably ought to do some e-mails and phone calls also are as important as the e-mails. Letters are even better, he added.

Mr. Duarte suggested members get messages to their legislators to support HIWA. He said the division is proceeding as if the program is funded and will start working on the state plan.

The question was asked who should be contacted and Lynn Hettrick, Tom Grady and Mike McGinnis were mentioned, as well as all Republican assemblymen.

Paul Gowin asked about the time frame for program implementation. Mr. Duarte explained the system would be developed and tested well in advance of the first benefit month which would be July 2004. The application will be taken three months prior. Mr. Gowin said he would like to receive a copy of the application package to let people know this is where it is going and to understand the parameters. Mr. Duarte replied that the division would get the drafts out as soon as possible. Mr. Gowin said that would be beneficial, to get people educated on that part.

IV. Staff Projects Status Update

a. Policy Development

Jean Laird reported on her trip to the Las Vegas Office to meet with Mary Jackson, the program specialist designated to work on the policy development. She said Ms. Jackson had completed an overall outline which had been reviewed and approved by the division. The outline also reflected what the advisory group had recommended. Ms. Jackson had written some definitions and had started on the eligibility part of the policy. Ms. Laird had all of the policy related background materials shipped to the Carson City Office for the new Program Manager, who will be writing the policy on how the program will operate. Ms. Laird noted it could be about six months of work. She said it will be three to four weeks before we can expect the new program manager. Paul Gowin asked Jean Laird to clarify the policies we are talking about. Ms. Laird responded by saying it is the policies that define how the program will work. William Heailvin, Cochair, asked whether anyone at the federal level had to approve the policy. Mr. Laird explained the Medicaid state plan is the federal approval of how we operate as a division and when the state plan is revised to include the HIWA program it will require federal approval.

b. Section 1619 Outreach (Section 1619 (a) and (b) of the Social Security Act)

Ms. Laird reported the 1619 Outreach conference is still in the plan for the year but it is not going to happen in July as hoped. William Heavilin pointed out that the group had previously

done some outreach and training. Paul Gowin was curious to know whether the outreach was effective and whether it resulted in an increase in the number of people applying for 1619b. He said we might want to find a way to track outreach efforts to see whether they brought in referrals and people into the system. Mr. Gowin said the Bureau of Adjudication can help us with this because they can get the number of applicants that applied before and after the outreach and training.

Kitty Barth, Administrator, Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities commented on training in Southern & Northern Nevada Mental Health Services and found that many of the counselors attending had not had an opportunity to attend the 1619(b) training and were excited to hear about 1619(b) and how it worked. She said we should look at how to reach out to the service providers that were not able to attend the first session.

William Heavilin asked to have 100 English and 100 Spanish 1619 brochures sent to him.

c. "Partners for Profits" Conference Update

Jean Laird reported the division has approved the "Partners for Profit" conference to be held jointly with Kitty Barth's group. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that delineates the responsibilities of the Division of Health Care Financing and Policy (DHCFP) and the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities has been developed.

Ms. Barth informed the group that her agency is being transferred from one department to another and the conference may not be possible for October. It might be held a little later, but it is in their plans. She said the conference might be held in January or February. Ms. Barth commented that Myla Florence and Libby Jones at the Department of Employment and Training (DETR) were really excited about the MOU and the opportunity to provide this kind of training to employers. She also mentioned the State Work Force Investment Board is interested in partnering on the conference.

Paul Gowin indicated the Center for Independent Living wanted to put together a consumer oriented conference on personal assistants. He thought cooperation with the "Partners for Profit" Conference might afford the opportunity for a good disability conference where a couple of topics could be covered. He said this partnership would result in a larger audience and get more consumers and information at one spot so people do not have to go to more than one conference. Mr. Gowin said he would like to talk about the conference at the next meeting after he has a chance to look at his grant and see how the members of his group feels.

d. "Ticket Team" Consumer Handbook Update

There was no new information to report on this handbook.

e. Workplace Personal Assistance Brochure

There was no new information to report on this handbook.

V. Old Business

There was discussion on the Advisory Group meeting notification process. Some members had not been receiving their agenda and minutes on a timely basis. It was decided to e-mail the agenda and minutes and also send a hard copy by First Class U.S. Mail.

a. Advisory Group Vacancies

The division has two names of candidates from the south; Margaret Wise and Anthony Amos. Connie Anderson will be considering them for appointment to the Advisory Group. No additional nominees were submitted. Ms. Anderson said she would like to have the new program manager involved in the selection of the new advisory group members and will wait until he or she is in place before she makes these appointments.

VI. New Business

a. Revision of By-Laws

Lisa Erquiaga suggested that the advisory group go back to one chairman instead of two cochaIRS. Paul Gowin concurred, saying it gives a definite authority to who is going to take charge and run the meetings. William Heavilin said it would require an amendment to the by-laws. He said the by-laws now read that there will be cochaIRS and they are to be elected in July. Paul Gowin requested that possible revisions to the by-laws be put on the agenda for the July meeting. Lisa Erquiaga was asked to draft the proposed language for the revision of the by-laws.

b. Election of New CochaIRS

It was decided that revision of the by-laws and the election of a new chairman or cochaIRS would be decided at the July meeting.

VII. Group Report

a. Robin Renshaw – Transition Forum

Robin Renshaw informed the advisory group that the next Transition Forum meeting will be August 29, 2003

VIII. Public Comment Period

There was discussion on the location for the July meeting. It was decided the meeting would be in Las Vegas. Since Connie Anderson has a conflict on July 17, 2003, the members agreed to change the date to July 24, 2003.

There was discussion on the meeting rotation in the rural locations and the lack of attendance in the rural areas. It was suggested there needed to be more work toward public awareness.

Paul Gowin expressed his concerns about the locations of the past advisory group meetings and encouraged the staff to consider the handicap accessibility and ensure the A.D.A. standard be met.

Robin Renshaw announced he was still planning to have a party at 5:00 p.m. at his house following the next advisory group meeting.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 p.m.